



FEMA

Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) Weapons and Safety Policy

It is the policy of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), National Preparedness Directorate, to ensure that every effort is made to provide a safe and secure environment during National Preparedness Directorate-sponsored exercises for its participants, observers/VIPs, control/evaluation staff, volunteers, and the general public.

Weapons

Federal and contractor exercise planners and controllers shall plan for and promulgate control measures with regard to weapons, whether introduced as a simulated device during exercise play or utilized by law enforcement officers in their normal scope of duties. For the purpose of this policy, a weapon shall include all firearms, knives, less than lethal weapons/tools/devices, and any other object capable of causing bodily harm.

Qualified personnel (law enforcement, security, military, etc.), with legal authority to carry weapons and who have an assigned exercise role (responder, tactical team, etc.) with the potential for interaction with other exercise participants (i.e., Actor Victims), shall NOT carry a loaded weapon within the confines of the exercise play area. They may continue to carry their weapon only after it has been properly cleared and rendered safe (i.e., no ammunition in chamber, cylinder, breach, or magazines) and only after being marked or identified in a conspicuous manner (i.e., bright visible tape around the visible stock or holster). The use of an area clearly marked as "off limits," and with assigned armed personnel to secure weapons in a container, vehicle, or other security area is acceptable, and should be consistent with host jurisdiction weapons security policies.

Qualified personnel (law enforcement, security, military, etc.) with legal authority to carry weapons, who are utilized to provide "real world" perimeter security for the exercise and have no assigned or direct interaction with exercise participants, may continue to carry loaded weapons as part of their normal scope of duty.

All other personnel with no legal authority to carry weapons shall not bring, introduce, or have in their possession any weapon of any type in any area associated with the exercise. Safety briefings will be provided to all exercise participants specifying provisions and policies regarding weapons prior to the start of the exercise.

Explosives and Pyrotechnics

Simulated explosive devices, such as 'flash bangs', pyrotechnics, flares, smoke grenades, etc. will be handled and/or detonated only by qualified exercise staff or bomb technicians. Eye and ear protection should be worn by any persons in the area explosive devices.

Aggressive Behavior

Aggressive behavior will not be tolerated during exercise conduct, except in matters of self-defense. Examples of aggressive behavior may include but are not limited to: excessive speeding; uncontrolled animals (e.g., K-9s, horses, etc.); employment of defense products (e.g., mace, pepper spray, stun guns, tasers, batons, etc.); and forceful use of operational response equipment or tools (e.g., pike poles, hose lines used at full stream on victims, etc.).

Exercise Notification

The DHS/FEMA National Preparedness Directorate supports exercise play that simulates real-life incidents; however, funds are not to be used for exercises that include or impact the general public without prior notification. Public notification includes, but is not limited to, message signs, press releases, post cards, radio/press advertisements and community hearings. Exceptions to this policy specifying special mitigating circumstances shall be directed, in writing, to their Exercise Manager or hseep@dhs.gov 30 days prior to the exercise.